

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheet includes changes to Fig 3. This sheet replaces the original sheet filed with the application which included Fig. 3. Fig. 3 has been amended to include the label "PRIOR ART".

Attachment: Replacement sheet
 Annotated sheet showing changes

REMARKS

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for thoroughly reviewing and considering the pending application. The Office Action dated October 5, 2005 has been received and carefully reviewed. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 3-5 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-5 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

The Applicant has amended the specification as noted above. The Applicant submits that the amendments more clearly describe subject matter which one skilled in the art would readily recognize was already disclosed in originally filed FIG. 5. As such, the specification amendments do not add new matter.

The Office Action indicated that Figure 3 should be designated with a legend as discussed therein. As noted above, the Applicant has amended Figure 3 as required in the Office Action. As such, the Applicants request that the objection regarding Figure 3 be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Applicant's Related Art (hereinafter "the *ARA*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,211,439 to *Moldestad* (hereinafter "*Moldestad*"). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

As required in Chapter 2143.03 of the M.P.E.P., in order to "establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." The Applicants respectfully submit that neither the *ARA* nor *Moldestad*, either singularly or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every element recited in claim 1. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the structure of the guide funnel. The claim 1 now recites "a groove inwardly disposed in a flow passage...of the guide funnel." The Applicant submits that neither of the references disclose or suggest this feature. As correctly pointed out in the Office Action, the *ARA* does not disclose an indentation. See *e.g.*, the Office Action at page 2. Similarly, *Moldestad* does not disclose these features.

The Office Action indicates that “*Moldestad* shows pipe joint connector with indentation for friction fit or tongue and groove fit between two different sized pipe ends 20, 22.” See e.g., the Office Action at pages 2 and 3. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. While *Moldestad* discloses a second cam key plate 22 of a female coupling 16, as may be clearly seen with reference to Figure 1, the second cam key plate does not disclose a groove inwardly disposed in a flow passage, as recited in claim 1. In fact, *Moldestad* discloses the exact opposite. As clearly shown in Figure 1, the cam key plate 22 projects outwardly from the female coupling 16. As such, the Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references and requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Furthermore, the Office Action rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the *ARA* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,315,005 to *Sproule* (hereinafter “*Sproule*”). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “a groove inwardly disposed in a flow passage...of the guide funnel” and a projection which “is inwardly disposed on the inlet duct.” The Applicant submits that neither of the cited references discloses these features. As correctly pointed out in the Office Action, the *ARA* does “not show an indentation for friction fit connector.” See e.g., the Office Action at page 3. Likewise, *Sproule* does not disclose a groove inwardly disposed in a flow passage and a projection which is inwardly disposed on an inlet duct.

The Office Action indicates that “*Sproule* III shows pipe joint connector with V-shaped indentation for friction fit or tongue and groove fit between two different sized pipe ends 84, 88.” The Applicant respectfully disagrees. The elements having reference numerals 84 and 88 in *Sproule* are not indentations. Instead, as may be clearly seen in Figures 6 and 7, reference numeral 84 refers to groove 84 that projects outwardly from a jacket 16. Reference numeral 88

refers to ridge 88 that projects outwardly from insulation 14. Both the groove 84 and the ridge 88 project outward, not inward, which is the exact opposite of claimed groove and projection recited in claim 1. Furthermore, even if the groove 84 and the ridge 88 were projected inwardly, neither of these features are "inwardly disposed in a flow passage...of the guide funnel" or "inwardly disposed on the inlet duct," as required by claim 1.

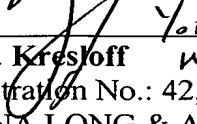
The Applicant has also added new claims 3-5. The Applicant submits that these claims recite novel features that are not disclosed in the cited references. As such, these claims are also patentable over the cited references.

The application is in a condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner believes a conversation with the Applicant's representative would facilitate the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: March 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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ANNOTATED SHEET

FIG. 2
Prior Art

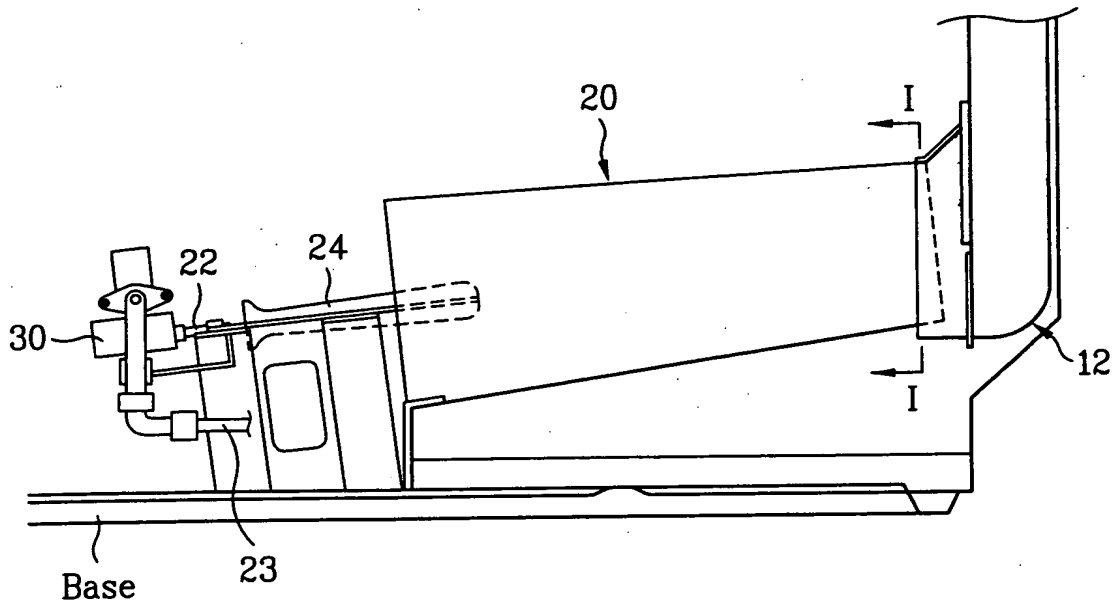


FIG. 3

- Prior Art -

